

critical habitats for bay scallop as outlined in the CHPP. The DENR should develop a strategy to fully support CHPP implementation with additional staff and funding. The MFC and DMF should continue to comment on activities that may impact aquatic habitats and work with permitting agencies to minimize impacts and promote restoration and research. Research must be conducted to investigate the impacts of trawling on various habitats.

A strategy should be developed and adopted by the MFC and DENR to accomplish the actions outlined below. These actions address Objectives 2 and 4 of the Plan. Actions 1, 8, 9, 11, 12, and 15 can be implemented by DMF/MFC. The other actions would need to be implemented through the cooperative efforts of the N.C. General Assembly and/or several divisions within the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The involvement of federal agencies and increased funding (state and federal) may also be necessary to accomplish these actions. Also included in subsection 8.4.1.

MFC Selected Management Strategies

Strategic Habitat Areas

1. Identify and delineate Strategic Habitat Areas that will enhance protection of bay scallop.

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV)

2. Completely map all SAV habitat in North Carolina.
3. Remap SAV habitat in Core and Bogue sounds and assess change in distribution and abundance over time.
4. Restore historical distribution and acreage of SAV wherever necessary.
5. Aggressively reduce point and non-point nutrient and sediment loading in estuarine waters, to levels that will sustain SAV habitat, using regulatory and non-regulatory actions.
6. Evaluate dock criteria to determine if existing requirements are adequate for SAV survival and growth and modify if necessary.
7. Develop and implement a comprehensive coastal marina and dock management plan and policy to minimize impacts to SAV and other habitats.
8. Evaluate and adjust as necessary dredging and trawling boundaries in Core and Bogue sounds to protect and enhance SAV habitat.
9. Seek additional resources to enhance enforcement of and compliance with bottom disturbing fishing gear restrictions that protect SAV and other habitats.
10. Work with NOAA and DWQ to determine appropriate levels of TSS, turbidity, chlorophyll a, and other water clarity parameters to achieve adequate water quality conditions for SAV growth.

Shell bottom

11. Conduct research to evaluate the role of shell hash and shell bottom in bay scallop recruitment and survival, particularly where SAV is absent.
12. Accelerate and complete mapping of all shell bottom in North Carolina.